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Everybody's Talking!

Real connection: In cities across Europe and beyond, a new kind of social scene is gaining traction. People gather in cafes and rented rooms to spend time together, with no phones or feeds, just actual presence. These meetups are part of the Offline Club, a growing movement helping people unplug from the constant scroll and rediscover old-school fun like card games, shared meals, or just talking. Started in Amsterdam, the project now has branches in major urban centers around the world, with each group adapting the idea to their local vibe. Some events also include digital detox retreats where participants fully unplug for several days. While the world scrolls on, some are choosing a slower, more traditional pace.

Lightning capital: Where the Catatumbo River meets Lake Maracaibo in northwest Venezuela, the world's most frequent lightning often appears in the night sky. Moist tropical air sweeping in from the Caribbean collides with cooler currents from the Andes, building massive storm clouds above the lake. Trapped by the surrounding mountains, these clouds discharge electricity, creating an astonishing spectacle. For hours, brilliant bolts can flash across the horizon like a constant performance. Small fishing communities with stilt houses stand nearby, accustomed to the drama. For scientists and travelers alike, it remains a fascinating and breathtaking sight.

Tickle mystery: Researchers are exploring tickling, one of the most curious sensations humans share. In a lab in Gelderland, Netherlands, a team of neuroscientists has built a device that delivers consistent, controlled foot tickles, helping them observe how the brain and body react. While animals like gorillas and rats also respond to tickling, scientists are trying to understand what purpose this odd reaction serves in social bonding and development. One focus is why people on the autism spectrum sometimes report stronger tickle responses. Another question is why we can't tickle ourselves. With every giggle and squirm, the team inches closer to unravelling the science behind this surprisingly complex response.

Sunken city: While checking coastal waters near Gujarat, India, scientists using sonar equipment noticed unusual patterns on the sea floor that resembled human-built layouts. Follow-up exploration uncovered items like pottery fragments, beads, and human remains, suggesting that people once lived there. The age of the site is debated, with some researchers arguing it predates known civilizations and others cautious about such claims. Rising seas and shifting landscapes may have buried the area, leaving only scattered traces for discovery. The find has fueled speculation that old legends about lost cities or epic floods may have some basis in reality. Whatever its true story, the submerged site continues to intrigue.

Quoteable Quotes

"Trust in dreams, for in them is the hidden gate to eternity." —Kahlil Gibran

"The happiest miser on earth is the man who saves up every friend he can make." —Robert E. Sherwood

What's Happening

Pokémon Club - Bring cards, games and plushies to show off and play. Professor Ally will host crafts, trading and trading card training. Bring your best TCG deck and challenge her to a match! For ages 6-12. Feb. 3, 5 to 6 p.m. at Charles B. Stewart Library.

Montgomery Lions Club Bingo - Doors open at 6:30 p.m. Feb. 7 at the Montgomery Community Center. Bingo starts at 7. Parking is available at Jim's Hardware. Popcorn, sodas and candy for sale. Family-friendly, smoke-free, cash only.

Hobby Hop at the Library - Feb. 13, 2 to 3 p.m. for adults at the Charles B. Stewart Library. This month is Trivia Afternoon, with a Jeopardy-like game.

Pace for Pink - March 28, 8 to 11 a.m. The Montgomery High Schools Leo Club is hosting a Breast Cancer Awareness Walkathon at the school auxiliary field. Entrance fee is \$10; kids 5 and under are free. Donations welcome. T-shirts will be available for sale. Food and drinks available. Facebook.com/MontTxLions

Historic Montgomery - Did you know the Montgomery Community Center sits on the spot where our town was founded back in 1837? A time capsule buried there in 1987 will be opened in 2037. See the old county jail (1855-1889) once used to hold those who partied just a little too hard until they sobered up!

Scan here to see more What's Happenings: →

Trivia

1. Claude Monet belonged to the _____ art movement.
2. Is a group of skunks called a surfeit, clowder, or drove?
3. In which continent are the Tigris and Euphrates rivers?
4. How many strings are on a standard guitar?
5. _____ Earhart was the first woman to fly solo across the Atlantic Ocean.

(Flip bottom of page for answers)



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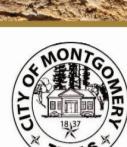
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Your Weekly Horoscope

ARIES

(March 20 - April 19)

Neptune is about to enter Aries for the next decade, which may have a long-term effect in your life. This might include being encouraged to make changes in your spiritual life. Lucky numbers: 9, 12, 15, 27, 38, 39.

TAURUS

(April 20 - May 20)

You may be tempted at week's end to dig in your heels. First take a step back, and carefully consider your reaction, to avoid a conflict you could find later that you regret. Lucky numbers: 13, 17, 19, 26, 27, 34.

GEMINI

(May 21 - June 20)

The week may start chaotically for you, including through information overload. Take a deep breath, and wait a few days for this pattern to change before deciding on changes. Lucky numbers: 5, 14, 24, 25, 26, 46.

CANCER

(June 21 - July 22)

Cancers generally make conservative risk vs. reward assessments regarding life decisions. But for the next month, new opportunities may require you to adjust that dynamic. Lucky numbers: 7, 11, 12, 15, 31, 48.

LEO

(July 23 - Aug. 22)

Have you evaluated your progress against the plans you established about six months ago? The end of the week may be a good time to complete some tasks to stay on track. Lucky numbers: 1, 14, 16, 30, 42, 47.

VIRGO

(Aug. 23 - Sept. 22)

You may find a new opportunity at the end of the week. This might mean that you will need to step outside of your comfort zone so that you can look at new options. Lucky numbers: 12, 13, 22, 23, 25, 39.

PISCES

(Feb. 19 - March 20)

Do you have a project that is off track? The end of the week may be a good opportunity to evaluate what is needed to complete the project, or decide if you could let it go. Lucky numbers: 6, 12, 18, 25, 26, 42.

Lucky numbers this week: This week's odds favor Aquarius winners with the luckiest number being 17.

Did You Know...

Space smell: Astronauts say space carries a unique odor that clings to spacesuits after a walk outside. Inside a spacecraft, they describe it as metallic or like seared meat, a strange reminder of conditions beyond Earth.

Sinking city: Some Mexico City neighborhoods sink up to 20 inches per year from heavy reliance on groundwater extraction. Water from underground aquifers meets the city's demand, but the ground compresses, causing dangerous, costly damage.

Vanilla roots: True vanilla comes from the beans of the vanilla orchid, making it rare, delicate, and costly. That's why most vanilla flavorings today are synthetic, even though they aim to mimic the taste of the real plant.

Hidden depths: Beneath the hills of Kentucky (U.S.) a twisting cave network called Mammoth Cave is known for its size and strange beauty. It has tunnels on multiple levels, with new passages still being found. Guided tours offer a walk into complete darkness.

Paw raft: Sea otters sometimes nap in groups called rafts, occasionally linking paws to stay together. While not always seen, these cozy gatherings reveal just how social and playful sea otters can be in the ocean.

On the Lighter Side

Why do dragons sleep during the day? So they can hunt knights.

The only guy I know who makes a long story short is my editor.

Cinderella was terrible at sports. Maybe because her coach was a pumpkin.

Patient: "Doctor, every time I stand up I see Mickey Mouse."

Doctor: "How long have you had these Disney spells?"

Knock! Knock! Who's there? Cargo. Cargo who? Cargo beep, beep!

Answers

Trivia answers: 1. Impressionist 2. Surfieit 3. Asia

4. Six 5. Amelia

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